

**Washington, D.C.** - Today, Congressman Costa responded to the unfortunate news that the 144<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, which is located in Fresno, has been included on the initial list of this year's round of base closures.

"I respectfully disagree with the Department of Defense's decision to close the 144<sup>th</sup>. The 144<sup>th</sup>

provides a great service to the nation and community. I will be very active in the review process and will do everything I can to reverse this decision," stated Costa.

Congressman Costa received the information this morning and stressed that is not a final decision. "While this list is the Base Realignment and Closure Commissioners' recommendations, the final decision will not be made for several months. Just as I have been very active in contacting the Department of Defense and President Bush before the decision was made, I will continue to do everything possible to keep the 144<sup>th</sup> open," Costa said.

Over the last several months, Congressman Costa has contacted Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and President Bush several times regarding the important work that the 144<sup>th</sup> does for the Central Valley and the protection the base provides the West Coast.

The 144<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing is a key component to California's homeland defense. It is the only permanently stationed Air National Guard fighter unit in California. "I believe that moving the 144<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing would jeopardize the homeland security interests of the Central Valley and all people in California. I strongly oppose the Commissioners' decision to close the 144<sup>th</sup>," concluded Costa.

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